



February 2015

### IN A NUTSHELL

**Family life and home-schooling are going well, as is the seminary's renewed emphasis on expository preaching, but the upcoming Presidential elections may make things more unsettled for a time.**

### PREACHING FOCUS



The seminary has recently renewed its focus on promoting better preaching, especially expository preaching – that is, preaching messages that are shaped by the Bible itself, and that help people understand the Bible's own message directly. The opportunity for this arose a year or so ago. We had a run of three or four rather ropery sermons in the seminary chapel – 'ropery' in sense of being rambling, and clearly a long way from the passage they were meant to be explaining. And they were sufficiently ropery that they were widely recognised as such, and so it was a good moment for building a consensus that we should try to do something about it.

Several things have come from that. We now have some extra courses for the degree students which focus on expository preaching, and we are also taking steps to launch a "Preaching

Centre" at the seminary.

The Preaching Centre should build some momentum during 2015, with several things coming together. In January, Alan Purser from Crosslinks ran a couple of mini-preaching conferences – a one-day conference for pastors, and a two-day conference for students. (These both went down very well, with about 45, and 90 attendees, respectively). The seminary has just become a regional centre for the Langham Preaching conferences, and we plan to start hosting those later in 2015. And in addition to all that, the seminary also has partnered with the Nigerian version of the Cornhill Preaching Course (currently known as ABC – Abuja Bible College). The seminary has invited ABC to relocate itself to the seminary's campus. ABC has been operating in Abuja for a few years, but has had problems with its site and needed to relocate. It is going to relaunch itself at Kagoro in September 2015.

Overall, we are very encouraged that expository preaching is getting a higher agenda at the seminary now.

## ELECTIONS

Please do pray for us at the seminary as the Presidential elections in Nigeria are approaching. The possibility of election-linked violence in the state of Kaduna and elsewhere in the country is very much on people's minds, and it would be great for you to support the seminary community and the country in their prayers for peace. Please pray that the elections will be fair, and that people will perceive them to be fair.

In addition to the threat of real violence please pray against the influence of rumour and propaganda related to potential violence. In tense situations these tend to spark real fear. Please pray that there would be sensible responses to rumour and that people wouldn't panic. Sometimes these kinds of rumours lead to pre-emptive violence as well, and can cause nearly as much damage as the real thing. It would be great if our students could learn wise and godly ways of dealing with rumour and propaganda, especially as church leaders they will have influence on their congregations in the future. As such their example could be quite powerful either in positive or negative ways. Thank God for a wise Provost and pray that his leadership will encourage many of our students to grow in practical wisdom in these areas.

## FAMILY LIFE

We have all been doing well with a few minor illnesses to contend with over the past month. We had the pleasure of welcoming Ezechi and Florence and their daughter Delight to the campus at the start of January. They are working with the preaching college, ABC (which is a Crosslinks-supported ministry). From September Ezechi will be continuing the work of training students in expository preaching. The family is currently settling into life in Kagoro and Ezechi is studying at the seminary. Please pray for them as they integrate here – they have had several practical setbacks. Pray that Christ would strengthen them and give them joy and comfort as they seek to serve him. Thank God that Delight has been getting on well with our kids. This new friend is a particular blessing for Asha who has recently experienced a close friend move house away from the seminary.

Alanna has joined the Sunday School teachers' team in the college chapel. Please pray for her as she learns about teaching and leading in a very different format from what she's used to. Pray that the Sunday School team would grow in their love and understanding of Christ, and in their ability to communicate that to the kids. Pray that Alanna might be able to offer helpful advice, and that our team would be effective in training up Sunday School teachers for future ministry, as well as teaching the children this semester.

Home school continues to go well. We have asked one of the college students to give the kids lessons in PE and Hausa. Auntie Nyella has also given me a couple of informal Nigerian cookery lessons. The photo shows the kids enjoying learning about the planets in the solar system with the aid of some glow in the dark stickers

## PRAYER POINTS

### Thanksgiving:

- The new focus on preaching is off to a good start
- Family life and home-schooling is going well

### Prayer requests:

- Stability and wisdom during the elections
- Alanna's new role in Sunday School
- ABC and other preaching initiatives that are starting up this year



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